

THE
REDEMPTION
of Time.

OR

A Sermon contayning very
good remedies for them that haue mis-
spent their time: Shewing how they
should redceme it comfortably;

By M. W. Master
in Arts

PSALME. 90. 12.

Lord teach vs to number our dayes, that we may
apply our heates vnto wisedome.



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THE REDEMPTION OF TIME.

EPHESIANS. 5. 16.

*Redeeme the Time, because the dayes
are euill.*

WHilst I bethought my selfe
of a portion of holy writ to
treat vpon, that might hold
some agreement with the
present season : this short
sentence offred it selfe vnto my minde.
At the first I rejected it as impertinent,
but after a second & more serious view,
mee thought it was the most fit Scrip-
ture that I could make choise of on this
occasion : for howbeit it hath pleased
the common sort of men, to stile these
festiwall dayes with the name of good
times: yet by reason of the grosse busage

2 *The Redemption of Time.*

to which the corruption of men hath
made them subiect, they may very well
receiue an alteration of their title, and in
a quite contrarie phrase be tearemed evill
daies, yea, and that in the highest degree
of all) the worst of dayes. Now in this
time wherin time is so lauishly misspent,
I hope it cannot seeme vncouuenient, or
vntimely, to giue a briefe exhortation
concerning the right vse of Time.

These words which I haue read, lead
vs into that path : being part of an ex-
hortation begunne in the former verse.
There in general, he had exhorted them
to be most strictly carefull of their
wayes, and to direct their course of life
in such respectiue sort, as they might de-
serue the name of wise, not vnwise men:
commending herein vnto them and vs,
that very strictnesse and precisenesse
wherewith the world hath now long
since pickt a quarrell & faine out. And
because this was but a generall rule, hee
seconds it with some particulars, by
which we may be led on to the like in-
stances in other matters. The first of
these specials is placed in the well
disposing

disposing of time, in this verse: Where
hauing set down the dutie of Christians
in this behalfe, hee backes it with a rea-
son; which in it selfe and to a spirituall
vnderstanding, is most sound and firmes;
but to the carnall iudgement of a carnal
man, is vioide of all soundnesse and rea-
son. The dutie is, to buy out the time, to
traffique with it, as men doe with wares,
and when it is in other mens hands (as I
may say) to give something (yea any
thing) that we may get it into our owne
hands, for good vies; He meanes that we
should vse our greatest care and dili-
gence (euen that which we would im-
ploy in matters most nearely concern-
ing vs) to win all the time we possibly
can, for the duties of Religion and God-
linessse. His argument to confirme this
exhortation, is taken from the contrary,
(if wee looke on it with a carnall eye, it
will seeme inconsequent, halting and not
able to beare vp the Conclusion) it is,
*because the dayes are evill: that is, the cu-
stomes and manners of the greatest part
of men that liue, are wicked and lewde.*
Now because the number and route of

the world is so strongly bent to al manner of vngodlines, as that they haue eueng tainted the time it selfe, and corrupted the very dayes; the **Apostle** would therefore haue the **Ephesians**, and all other Christians so much the more industrious, to take all seasons and occasions for the bettering of themselues. Because other men are naught and stark naught, therefore ought faithfull Christians to be good and very good, and to turne all opportunities to this end and vse, that they may be furtherances to make them good.

The world would haue framed a more crooked conclusion from this ground, and haue said: because men are so generally and extreamly bad (for that is noted in saying, *the dayes are euill*) we must therefore needs straine curtesie a little, and not be too strickt, least we should be ouermuch different from other men, & incur the by-name of Singularists. But the **Apostle** telleth vs, that because the wayes of men are excessively disordered & full of naughtines, we should bestow so much the more paines, that we might

might not be carried downe the violent
stremme and deluge of vnsanctified li-
ving, and vnto this entent should ear-
nestly watch & diligently take all good
occasions of getting and doing good.
You see in part the meaning of this
short sentence, which containeth a few
words indeed, but is stufffull of worthy
matter, which (according as my weak-
nesse can attaine) I shall striue to spread
before your eyes, vnfolding it in such
manner, as that you may perceiue the
things that lay therein closely wrapped
vp before.

The point which the words offer to Doctrine,
our consideration at the first sight, is
this; that all Christians ought to be ve-
ry good husbands for their time. Good
houres and opportunities are marchan-
dize of the highest rate and price: and
whosoeuer will haue his soule thriue,
must not suffer any of these bargains of
time to passe him, but must buy vp, &
buy out all the minutes thereof. No man
of trade can be more carefull to chaf-
fer and deale in the most gainful things
that pertaine to his occupation, then we

should be to deal in this ware of time,
wherein euery Christian is, or should
be a well taught and practised dealer.
As such kinde of men (if they can ey-
ther make money themselues, or bor-
row it of their friends, yea, or else (such
is the greedinesse of men) take it vp of
the Vsurer) will not let slip any com-
moditie, wherein they haue skill, and are
perswaded, that it wil bring in large pro-
fit within a short time of returne : so
should euery good man vse all diligence
(for diligence is in stead of money here,
and care in stead of coyne) to gaine eu-
ery day, euery houre, and euery minute
(so much as may be possible) from all
vnprofitable actions, and ouer-worldly
affaires, to bestow the same on the du-
ties of Religion and Godlinessse. This
being such a parcell of ware, as if it be
wisely bestowed, when it is heedfully
gotten, will come in againe with both
hands full of profit for recompence of
ones paines taken in that behalfe. This
selfe same exhortation, this same Apo-
stle deliueres in so many words vnto the
Colloſſians, when he saith : *walke wisely
towards*

towards them that are without, and redeeme the Time. See how Paul, an old, beaten and experienced dealer in these matters for the soule, doth neyther forget, nor neglect to teach his apprentices (as I may call them) the very secrets & misteries of the trade of good liuing, whereof this is one, euen the thrifte laying out and getting in of time: which being repeated to the Collosians (as wel as delivered to these Ephesians,) comes with a double charge vpon our minds, to make vs heedfull in these bargaines. And that excellent petition of Moses the man of God, doth meane nothing else but this, when in other words hee saith: *Teach me so to number my dayes Psal.90.38
that I may apply my heart to wisdom.* For hee meanes that God would inable him with grace, so seriously to consider of the shorntnes of this life, and the transitorinesse of this present world, as that he might take all occasions, and vse all meanes to bend his heart to the seeking and obtaining of the true knowledge of God & himselfe, and so the true feare of god, which is the beginning of wisdom.

And

And the want of this husbandry,
Christ doth mournfully lament in the
Cittie of Ierusalem, setting out vnto vs
also the grieuous and dismall effects &
consequents of this heedlesnesse, in re-
gard of taking time, & vsing the fit op-
portunitie. *O (saith he) if thou haddest
euen knowne, at the least in this thy day,
those things that pertaine unto thy peace,
But now are they hid from thine eyes, &c.*
As if he had said: hitherto thou hast had
the meanes to learne what made for thy
good, and what might haue preuented
thy ruine; and if thou haddest but euen
at this last houre marked and consid-
ered them, thou mightest haue escaped
these fearefull iudgements: but now that
thou hast been all this while wanting to
God, hee will hereafter be wanting to
thee, thou shalt never haue any true
knowledge of these things, nor euer a-
uoid these miserable calamities. Because
they did not vse time whilst time did
serue to repent and turne to God, ther-
fore after it was too late, God would not
heare them nor helpe them. They that
refuse the good offer of a good bargain
from

from God, shall not haue this bargaine offred againe at their pleasure: yea, God wil not deale with them at their leasure, that wold not deale with him at his leisure. And Wisdome in *Salomons wife* Pro. 1.24. Booke of *Proverbs*, speakes to this effect. 25. 26. feare of vngodly men, that when their miserie comes shee will laugh at them, because when shee gaue her good instructions to prevent this miserie, they laughed at her. The neglect of taking the fit time and occasion to follow wisedomes hole-some counsell, and to come when shee calls: plungeth scornfull men into such a depth of miserie, as that there is no meanes of recovery. For when wisdome laughes a man to scorne, whither shall hee repaire for succour? And to this intent, (of husbanding our time well) notable is the saying of the same Apostle in another place, bidding vs, whilst we haue time, do good to all: as much as if he had told vs, that time must so much the rather be bestowed in doing good (and then it is accounted) because we haue no such great store of it, as wee doe

Gal. 6. 10.

113. The meaning of a man.
doe foolishly imagine. The vessell of time is not so ful(as most men dreame,) nay it will soone come to the bottome: it is then wisdome to spare betime, and not in the very dregs and lees. All these places doe in most plaine manner confirme the point, *viz.* that euery Christian must be very sauing and thrifte of his time, that is, must conuert all occasions to the good of his soule, and furthering of his reckoning, not suffering by his will any houre or minute (more then needs must) to be laid out in any thing, but matters that may fit him for a better life. This is in truth to haue ones conuersation in heauen, when one vpon the least occasion is ready to make one step further thitherwards: when one gives all this time to God, but so much as may be more especially to religious exercises, and such things as doe after a peculiar sort make for a better life, not letting slip any meanes of furtherance that is offered him this way.

Now for your better direction in this sauing thift, and for the more full vnderstanding of this point, and more easie

easie practising of this needfull dutie, I purpose to stand some while in shewing these two things. First, from what Time is to be redeemed. Secondly, what the time is which must be redeemed.

For the first, we must vnderstand that there be ffeue hucksters of time, very cor-morants and ingrosers of this precious ware, which betwixt them (for the most part) get vp all the houres of mens liues, not suffring the soule to enjoy so much as an houre for it own vse, vpon the best occasion to benefit it self. These thefes, when I haue tolde you their names, I will describe more at large. They be: ffirst, vaine sports: Secondly, vaine spee-ches: Thirdly, immoderate sleeping, or sluggishnes: Fourthly, vaine thoughts: Lastly, immoderate following of world-ly busynesses and affaires, Play, Twat-ling, Sleeping, foolish thinking, exces-sive rooting in the earth. Now for these fond sports (amongst which I compre-hend riotous feasting and belly.cheare, a companion of gameing for the most part, and also that trifling, and woman-ish disease of curiositie in putting on

on apparel!) for these, I say, it is easie to proue that they doe eate vp these good houres, which otherwise, would much i[n]rich the soule of man. *Salomon* the w[is]est of meer men that liued since *Adam*, hath set it downe as a sure rule (that neuer failes, scarce euer admits exception)

Pro.21.17 *That bee which lones pastime shall be poore, and he that lones wine and oyle shall not be rich.* If this saying be ynderstood onely of the body it is most true: For these things will make a man extreamly needy in the midst of large possessions, and plentious reuenews. But if wee apply it to the soule, (as I see not cause why it may not be applyed to both) it is most vniuersally true. Hee that is so wedded to his pleasures, and besotted vpon vaine delights, as that the current of his life is carried that way, or else too great a part of the streme is turned thither; shall be destitute of ynderstanding, shall haue a naked, ragged, totred soule: and that comes because hee hath not vsed his time well, by the right imployment whereof hee might haue got wealth for his better part, I meane vnto his

his minde and hart. A thread-bare hart
needy of knowledge comes from a vo-
luptuous life stuffed with pleasures, and
the prophet *Isaiah* cryes out with a wo-
full & a bitter cry, against those which
had the timbrell, the pipe, and the harp
in their feast, but would not regard the
work of the Lord: All their daies were
taken vp in eating and drinking, in ban-
queting and feasting, in good cheere &
mery making, so that there was no time
to meditate and thinke on those afflic-
tions whereby God did warne them to
repentance and amendment, which is
most contrary to this duty of redeeming
the time, for all this time is even lost and
cast away. And had we no other proofe
then our owne experience in this be-
halfe, would it not manifestly conuince,
that he which desires to redeem the time,
must fly these vaine delights and sportis?
For doe we not plainly see what a can-
ker it is in a number of mens liues, when
many dayes they beslow thre or four
houres together, yea halfe the day, if not
the whole, in dicing, carding, bowling,
shouell-boord, or the like idle (if not
wicked)

Isai. 5.12.

wicked) exercises? doth not this wast
and poure forth time ouer lauishly? Or
can that man haue so much rest and qui-
et, or so much fitnesse and opportunitie
to do good to his soule, as his wife care
in cutting of these needleſſe recreations
(or vexations rather) would haue affor-
ded him? For these vaine pleasures are
not alone mischieuous hinderers of this
thrift, in that they consume the very
houres themſelues; but as much, or more
also in that they diſſettle the heart, and
pull the affections out of ioynt, so that
a man is driven to take as much paines
to ſet his heart to a good exerciſe, as
would well haue diſpatched the duty,
had hee not beeene thus vnfitted. Now
what a miserable losſe is it when a man
is robbed of his time, and of his heart
both at once? And by both kept from
reading, praying, meditating, exami-
ning his hart, or any ſuch good exerciſe
for his foules aduantage. Wherefore if
any man would ſo preuent these vaine
and foolish ſports that they ſhould not
spoyle him of his heart and houres: let
him obſerue theſe two rules in his ſports
and

and then hee shall doe well in these respects.

First, (this being presupposed that he doe not vse any recreations, but those which he can proue to be in thenaclues lawfull:) first, I say, for the beginning of recreation, let euery man know that recreation must foliow labor, for the most part, or if at any time it goe before it, it must be very little, onely to fit one for labor. The Lord allowes a man no sporr, though never so lawfull in it selfe, vntill such time as his body or minde do stand in neede of it, chiefly when they haue bin busied in some such honest affaires, as by wearyng them, haue made them vnsit to further labor, so that they must againe be fitted thereto by recreation. Vntill paines-taking haue made the body or mind not so wel able to take pains, there is no allowance ordinarilie for recreation. All our sports and recreations, if wee will vse them well, (I speake of those which are lawfull) must be to our body or minde, as the Mowers whetstone or rifle is to his Syth, to sharpen it when it growes dull. He that when his

Syth is dulled, will not (vpon a desire to doe more worke) take time to whet it, shall cut lesse, and with more paine, and more vnhandsomely then hee neede to doe: so he that when his body or mind is tyred or heauy, will not vse some honest refreshing, shall doe lesse, and with lesse dexterity then he might. But on the other side, if the Mower should do nothing from morning to noone, or from noone to night but whet, whet, whet, rubbing his Syth, he would both marre the Syth, and be counted an idle workeman also, for loosing his daies work: so he that will runne after the most honest delights when neyther the wearinessse of his body, nor heauinessse of minde requires the same, (but onely vpon a fond lust or longing after them,) shall in time destroy his wit and strength, and in the meane season meruailous vnthriftily misspend his time. Therefore let not a man beginne the day with play, thought never so lawfull, vntesse his body or mind require some necessary exercise to make it more apt for his calling. Hee that sets into the day sportingly, shall be sure to

goe through it, eyther lumpishly or sinfully, much more if he spend all the day from morning to night in playing, let it be never so much holy-day, or haue hee what other excuse he will. This rule is for the beginning of sports.

The second is for the measure and continuance of them, where this is a generall and a firme direction : that it is not lawfull for a man in an ordinary course to spend more time in any pastime vpon any day, then in religious exercises, I meane chiefly priuate Religious exercises, I say, it is viterly vnlawfull to bestow a larger time any day vpon the most lawfull delight, then in priuate Religious exercises, or at least in a customable course so to doe. This is plainly prooued by that which Christ speaks to vs, saying: *First seeke the kingdome of God and the righteousnesse thereof.* You see here commanded to preferre the seeking of heauen before any other thing whatsoeuer, to let that haue the chiefe place in our soules and in our liues. Now hee that first seekes the kingdome of heauen, cannot bestow more

Mat.6.33.

time in sports of any sort, then in those things which doe directly make for the obtaining of eternall life, and that righteousnesse which will bring one therevnto, such as are hearing and reading the Word, praying, meditating, examining the heart, conferring, and the like. And surely this is a most equall thing, that the most needful duty should haue the most time bestowed vpon it. Yea, and it is a most easie rule to all sorts of men, that haue seasoned their hearts with the true feare of God. For if a mans calling lye in bodily works, then the very exercises of Religion are a refreshing to his body, in that he doth for the space while they continue desist from his bodily labour, (and his calling affords sufficient stirring of the body for health) so that if hee be religiously minded, and haue indeed set his delight on God, he may well giue as much time to these actions, as to any carnall sports. But if any mans calling lie in study, or such like labour of the minde, first, the change is a great refreshing, and varietie a delight; and then there be religious exercises, which will refresh the minde.

minde as well as any sports, and for so much exercise as health requires, it is not long in vsing, because nature is here, as in other matters content with a little, howsoever men seeke excuses by be-lying her: so that at the leaft, an equal portion of time must be alotted to God, and Religion, as to sports and delights, euen of students, if they will first seeke the kingdome of God. Therefore let a man measure out the time of sporting and recreating himselfe, by the time he takes to pray, to read, to meditate, to sing Psalmes, to confer of good things, or the like, and know that hee hath not libertie from God to imploy ordinarily so much time, neuer to imploy one minute more, in the most vnoffensive sports, then in these seruices of God. Now let a man conforme himselfe to these two rules. Begin not play till need of body or mind craue it: Continue not sports longer then a man hath or shall continue some godly priuate exercise of religion, and hee shall saue his time well from this first Theefe.

Now comes to be confidered the

next spender or rather robber of time, that is, idle twatling or babling: and concerning this our Sauiour Christ deales Mat.12.36 plainly with vs, saying: *That of every idle word which men shall speake, they shall give account at the day of iudgement: think well of this sentence, and lay vp euery word. Thou must not alone giue account of thy workes, but also of thy words: thou must not alone be called to a reckoning for moving of thy hand, foot, or whole body, but of thy tongue also; and that not alone for wicked words, sinfull words,害mefull words, speeches in themselues infectious and rotten; but for idle and wast words; and not onely, for a number of idle words, for a whole throng or fleete of them, but for euery idle word.*

Now then if there be an account to be giuen, and a reckoning to be made for these rubbish speeches; judge if it be not a want of redeeming the time, to lay it out in such a thing as will bring a sore and heauy burthen afterwards without repentance to cast it off; and judge if hee which makes much of time had

not

not need take much heed of this ill spent
breath. Not alone then wicked speaking
(when one belcheth forth lewd and fil-
thy words) not slanderous and back-
biting talke (when one whispers of his
neighbours faults behind his backe, vt-
tering perhaps also lying reports, and fa-
thering that vpon him which he never
did or meant) but even vaine, needlesse,
and vnproufitable words (which tend to
no good or wholesome vse for the soule
or body) are a misspending of time and
contrary to this precept, and therefore
also to be shunned of him that is this
way thriftily disposed.

No man can talke idly, but hee casts
himselfe vpon a double damage, even
the losse of a word, and the losse of time:
two great losses, what euer men imagine
of them : And therefore the Apostle
Paul also findes fault with a certaine
sort of women that were prattlers, which
would goe from house to house, twat-
ting and babling out frothy speech, that
was good for nothing, which fault hee
condemnes as a matter something worse
then idlenesse, or doing nothing, when

one talkes toyes or trifles, and speakes shadows or gawds that yeeld no profit. Such twatling cuts out the hart of good time, for it hath seldome any measure, it creepes by little and little ouer a great part of the day, and sometimes of the night. How many winter nights doe men suffer themselues to be robbed of by this childish babling? And in the fourth verse of this Chapter, the Apostle forbids foolish speaking & iesting: The one is a rousing discourse, gathering together a great deale of chaffie geere, that will feed no manja busie but absurd prosecuting of a headlesse and footlesse tale (as wee may call it in our phrase.) The other is a setting of ones selfe, and sharpening of his wit, to coine pretty and wittie scoffes and conceits that may move laughter, and for this end onely: Both these are condemned, as vnlawfull, and vnbecoming Christians.

There must be a difference made betwixt a smooth and pleasant uttering of ones minde in seemly phrases, and good and delightfull termes & manner: and this whetting of the wit to bandie

and

and tosse sharpe and brinish taunts and quirks.

Now this pleasantnesse of the most honest sort is not to be vsed as a custome, but in the nature of a refreshing, when men are dulled, for better matter. For laughter being a power of Gods creating, and wholesome to the body, and therefore lawfull, it cannot be vnlawfull in a seemely sort, harmelesly to moue laughter by words, but it must not be iesting: one must not giue himselfe to it, and make it his occupation for an houre or two together. Now none can be ignorant how great an hindrance this vaine speech is to the well imploying of time. For doe we not see that in many places whole dayes are cast away in the deepe gulfe of rousing, and vnprofitable runnagate babling to no purpose? And that whole meales are devoured in gibing and iesting, if without taking the sacred name of God in vaine, and hurting ones brothers name (which is very seldom) yet excessiuely, and not without thrusting out better matter, which is a grievous fault.

silencio

Where-

24
Wherfore that we may be well armed
against this robber, let ys obserue dili-
gently these two rules,

First, let vs make conscience of our
words, & of the mouing of our tongue,
knowing it to be a necessary duty that
God hath imposed vpon ys to haue our
words alwayes gratioues, and seasoned
with salt alwayes good for the matter, &
tempered with wisedome for the manner.
Which precept the Apostle ads pre-
sently after this, of redeeming the time

Col.4.5. (to the Colossians) as a notable part of
it. The Law of grace then must be the
bridle of our tongue, and Wisedome
must raigne in our mouthes, so that we
speake nothing but that which may be
for some profit, to our owne or others
soule or body, being fittly tempered to the
present circumstances of time, place, &c.
where and when wee speake. For the
words are gracious, not alone when they
tend to the further edification of the
Soule in some matter of Religion, but
also when they be busied about ones
honest outward affayres and lawfull cal-
ling, this being a great furtherance to
godliness

godliness that a man know how (and accordingly practise it) to follow his calling with dexterite and wisedome.

Now hee that would not haue vnnecessary trifling words steale into his heart and out of his mouth, and so spoile him of good seasons, must set it downe as a thing to which his conscience is bound (as well as not to lye, sweare or slander) not to speake one word, whereof he cannot give some reason from the good that hee doth aime at in speaking of it. And every man must know that hauing let slip such a word hee hath committed such a sinne, as makes him liable to Gods iudgement, and to the sentence of condemnation.

The want of resoluing the hart thus, causeth many to take libertie to their tongues, (and harmefull libertie it is) and yet to thinke they haue done no harme to themselves in so doing. And therefore the common excuse of such twatlers is this: I hope that it is no harme: yea, but what good was it? If it were not directed to some good, it hath done harme, for it hath broken Gods commandments.

26 *Abreast of the Law.*
commandement, and set thy selfe deeper
in debt then thou was before, thou hast
one trespass more to answer for before
Gods tribunall, no man shall ever auoid
this puddle, that will not be perswaded
it is a damnable sin to step into it. First,
then labour to conuince thine heart, and
frame thy practise to this rule in all
speaking.

Secondly, for honest comely mirth
in speech (besides that it must not relish
of lust, nor sauour of malice and pro-
fanenesse, for then it is worse then idle
words) it ought to be bounded with
this rule, namely, that it be vsed as a
meanes to quicken our selues or others
against some naturall heauiness or dead-
nesse, by which the heart is made vnapt
for better conference and other exerci-
ses of more profitable vse; and when
this effect is brought to passe, that laugh-
ter hath scattered the mist of dulnesse
from off the heart and minde, (or if no
such occasion be offred) then let mirth
& natural laughter, giue place to his bet-
ters, otherwise comming into a continu-
ed custome, and shoulde ring out more
need-

needfull communication, that takes the name and nature of iesting, & is a thing much vnbeseeeming the staidnesse of a Christian. Thus the tongue may be bound from dealing falsly with the hart, and cousening the soule of good houres and occasions.

Now followes the third deuouter of time, and that is immoderate sleeping or sluggishnesse. The wise king *Salomon* bare a great hatred to this Theefe, and giues many warnings and caueats, wherby men might learne to take heede of it. The bed is as a very cunning and slye cousenour, that yseth a pleasing tricke to deceiue a man, and robs him vnder shew of friendship. Now *Salomon* hath made a most fit discription of a sluggard caught by the wiles of sleepe and sloth, setting him out to the light. *Pro. 6.9.10* *Preu. 6.9.*
11. Where hee brings him in rooming 10.11. himselfe, and rubbing his eyes with an unwilling hand, uttering broken and sleepy sentences, as one not halfe awake. First, he calis him vp (as it were) saying: *How long wilt thou sleepe, when wilt thou rise out of thy sleepe?* As if he had said:
Ho,

Ho, sir, it is time to get vp, what, not out of your bed yet, at this time of the day? Then mark the drowsie, slumbering, and sencelesse answere: *A little sleepes, a little slumbers*: for the originall hath the words in the plurall number, well befitting a sluggard) *a little folding of the bands to sleep*. See how speaking of sleep all is in the littles: and though he names sleepes, yet it is but a little in his conceit. Hee telz not when hee will rise, but hee cannot rise yet, and when hee hath had enough, and too much already, then hee must haue a little more, begging for sleepe as one would beg for bread. Hee askes a little because hee would not be denied. First, hee must haue sleepes, and hauing slept, hee must haue slumbers, & hauing slumbred, hee must fold his hands and ryme and tumble himselfe. Behold a sleeper in his colours: and mark what answere *Salomon* giues, hee spends no more time to call him vp, but telz him his doome as hee lyes in his bed: *Therefore thy pouertie comes as a trauailer, and thy necessitie as an armed man*: As if he had said: well be it so, if you will needs sleepe

sleepe on, take your belly-full of sleepe, but know that sith you shew such skill in begging sleep, you shall euen become a begger for it; sith you will haue your fill of sleepe, you shall haue little enough of any wealth; pouerty will pursue you, and ouertake you, it will follow you, and surprise you, it will make hast and strike home, you cannot runne from it, nor resist it, it comes with speede and with force; it will take you in bed where you cannot flye away from it, nor drive it from you: and what he saith of outward pouertie, is most certaine of inward penurie, a sluggard hath so much the lesse grace, by how much hee hath the more sleepes and slumbers. So the same wise King hath set out a sluggard in another place, saying: that *a sluggard Pro.16.14.* tumbles himselfe on his bed, as the doore on the hinges, that is, he is still there, and there must be such adoe before hee can be remoued from off his cowch, as if one were to lift a doore off the hooke, a man must come with leauers to heave him off. Call him, waken him, bid him rise &c. all is little enough to reare him.

This

This sluggish humour (you see) is condemned long agoe, for a misspender of time. And surely it is not alone very dangerous in regard of the quantity, and muchnesse of the time which it filcheth, but also in regard of the qualitie and goodnesse; for it ordinarily feedes glutonously on the very fat of time; it eates the very flowre of the day; & consumes the first fruits of our houres, even the morning season. After sleep hath made strong what labour hath weakned; after that nature hath beene well refreshed, and the revived spirits come with a fresh supply of strength and nimblenesse to serue the body and the minde: then for want of exercise all growes dull againe; as a band of Souldiers that grow effeminate by lying in garrison without labour all the Summer. Thus it robs one of the principall and most seasonable time, when the minde and body were both in the greatest fitnes to read, pray, meditate, or to dispatch and cast any matter of ones calling, it is a theefe that robs one, not of his baggage stuffe, but euen of his gold and Iewels. (For some time

time is better then other, as much as some mettall is better then others, and this alwayes for the most part takes away the most precious;) yea, it hath one tricke as much & more dangerous then the former: If a man giue himselfe to sluggishnesse, it will often follow him to Church, and close vp his eyes and eares, both of body and minde from hearing and marking those most wholesome exhortations, confortes, reproofes, and instructions, which like so many pearles, Gods Messenger with a liberall hand, according to the pleasure of his Lord doth scatter amongst men, that who so will, may take them vp. The time of preaching and expounding the Word with applying it is the time of haruest, it is Gods market day, nay, it is his dole or princely congie, when hee giues gifts freely, and those of great worth too, vnto those that will take them. How can it choose but be a great hinderance to a mans estate to sleepe in haruest, and to be in bed at such a time when so much wealth is bestowing.

Therefore this sleepe you see, is a most

crafty and pernicious deceiver, and doth with much cunning over reach a man, taking from him, for the most part, the morning time, and the time of hearing, two the most profitable seasons, and the most worthy to be redeemed of all others. Now against the deceit of this false companion, a man may defend himselfe by following these two rules.

First, it is not lawfull for any man vpon pretence of leasure from busynesse to take more sleepe then is required for the strengthening and refreshing of his nature. The measure of ones sleepe or lying in bed must not be according to ones busynesse, but so much as his nature requires, for the better enabling of it to performe the duties of his calling and of religion. Indeede a man may and ought to breake his sleepe, and stinte himselfe in this regard, when important busynesse, cyther for the soule or body doe pressle vpon him, but no man must take more sleep then is requisite for the sufficient refreshing of nature vpon vacacion of necessary affaires. The reason of this is plaine: It is a sin to straine and stretch

stretch naturall things for the seruynge of lust, beyond that end for which they were created and ordayne^d. Now sleepe and lying in bed was ordayne^d for the strenthening of nature, and for the repairing of the spirits diminished by la-
bour, wherefore it must not be drawne beyond this end, to the satisfying of a sluggish humor. So that as it were a fault for a man to sit and cram himselfe with meate, till his stomach would turne backe the morsels, because no busynesse did call him from the table: so it is a sin to give ones selfe to immoderate sleep-
ing or slugging in bed (as our word is, to sleepe compasse) because no vrgent mat-
ter doth call him vp. This is to be on the bed as a door on the hinges, that one cannot rise til a leauer come, that is, some thing euⁿt almost of necessitie. It is wic-
ked to surfe on sleepe as well as on meate. So then it shall be a great helpe against sluggishnesse, to know that God allowes not any man to be sluggish, and therfore to accustome ones self to timely rising: for in this one thing custome hath as much power almost as in any thing,

so that looke what is ones vse, that hee shall hardly refraine. Hee that doth customably forsake his bed so soone as hee feeles his nature fresh, and his spirits quickned, shall with ease keepe on in so doing. But hee that takes libertie to laze himselfe, and dull his spirits for lacke of vse, shall finde the more hee sleepes, the more he shall be drowsie, till he become a very slau to his bed, and make sleepe his maister. So a healthfull body by confessing it to be his dutie, (and through custome though hard at first) drawing it vnto a nature, may have the morning at command. And this is the first rule.

Secondly, for the time of hearing the word, hee that would not be troubled with such sluggishnesse then, must looke that he doe vse meate, and drinke, and sleepe moderately, in the first season of it, and then striue to quicken himselfe against carnall heauinessse and sorrow, by prayer and meditation before hand, which two things will keepe a healthful body in such good temper, that sleepe shall not ordinarye oppresse it in this most sacred exercise.

Now

Now followes the fourth Theefe to be arraigned, and that is idle thoughts. Mans imaginacions will be working, and tossing conceits vp and downe almost continually. Now all men by nature are so tainted with the sicknesse of vanitie, that their mindes will runne willingly after nothing else, but that which vanitie begets. And for this cause men haue taken vp a Preuerbe, to dazzle their eyes (if it might be) that this might not seeme a fault; they say, that *Thought is free*, as though one should never answere for idle thoughts. And it is the common excuse of men to say, They thinke no harme, as though it were enough, to hatch no mischievous and harmefull Conceites, notwithstanding they doe exceed in idle and vnprofitable imaginacions. Whereby it may be seene that men are so farre from reforming this fault, and annoyding this theef, that they will not take it for a fault, nor esteem it as a theefe of time. But this swallowes vp most of our solitarie houres, when men are in bed, or alone in the night season, and cannot sleepe,

or when they be iournying and walking without company, they cannot then possibly talke with others when no man is present: yet their mind doth busie it selfe in idle talking with it selfe, casting a thousand fond things before ones eies, as, what if this should be, or what if that should come to passe, and much adoe to little purpose. This toying and frisking of the fantasie, like a wanton calfe let loose from the stal, is a fretting worm that eats out a great deale of most mens time, so that they cannot redeeme it, for the profit of their hearts. This puis by good meditations, and suggests fetherly light stuffe that hath no good substance in it, froth and fome which is not nourishment to the minde, but rather poison, in that it fils it full of winde, and a windie hart is no leffe burdensome then a windy stomack. This casts out the cogitation of Gods benefits that one may not be thankfull for them; it shoulders away the thought of ones owne sinnes, that he may not renew his godly sorrow and repentance for them; it iussels out the consideration of Gods graces, that

that we cannot set our affections on fire to long and labour after them. And in all these respects it takes away the benefit of much good opportunity. For every time a man is alone, separated from all company, and outward busines, there is an excellent occasion of furthering his owne soule, offred ynto him. If any thing grieue him, he may freely disburthen his heart into Gods bosome; if hee faulted any way hee may haue full and free scope to confess and bewaile it, if hee want any good thing, there is leasure and place i'th' as effectual manner, and with as many words as one can to beg it of the Lord. Thus great riches might come to the soule by a wel-spent solitariness: but vaine cogitations doe deprive a man of all this, and do so blow vp the mind with that which is nothing, as it growes swolne, like the flesh of him which hath the dropsie, so that it may well be called the dropsie of the minde. Now, for a help against this vanity of the minde breaking forth in idle thoughts and fancies; First, wee must take the counsell of Salomon, *To keepe the heart* Prou. 4.23

with all diligence. The hart is that which must be narrowly looked vnto, that euill and ynprofitable thoughts rise not vp in it. Here must be the speciall care to prevent, first breeding and ingendring of sinne, in the most inward parts.

This theefe will be still filching and stealing time continually, doe what one can. Wherefore a watchfull and wary eye must be had thereunto, and a diligent garde must be set before the heart, to keepe out such imaginations from entring, as be like rogues and vagrants worth nothing, and alwayes come to steale something. When a man makes conscience of his thoughts, and obserues them to what end they tend, this will be an excellent helpe to keepe them from wandring, whereas if one will follow the prouerbe, and esteeme them as free, they will never be kept from a busie fondnesse, like Ants in a mole-hill, that runne vp and downe hither and thither, and doe nothing.

Then in the second place, we must labour to be prouided before hand, of some profitable matter or subject, wher-
vnto

vnto to bend the thoughts in solitari-
nesse; something that tends to the glory
of God, and our owne good, either in
matters of the soule, or the lawfull af-
faires of the body, must be let into the
soule to take vp the roome, that the busie
fancies may be the better stopt out.
And indeed the Lord hath prouided a
Christian of good store of such matter,
if hee be not wanting to himselfe. For
there is nothing that offers it selfe to any
of our senes, which doth not also offer
to our minde (if it were not starke blind)
some glorious attribute of God to bee
seen and considered of. So that to want
occasion of good thoughts in this varie-
tie of matter, is to want light at noone-
tide, that proceeds from nothing but
from want of eyes. But this is a great
helpe to him that can see to set his soule
a worke first on the good things. For
if one haue let his heart loose at first, he
shall not (without much paines & toyle)
catch it againe, and haue it within com-
maund. Thus doing, a great part of vaine
cogitations shall be cut off.

Now comes to be handled the fift
and

and worst of all the fise consumers of time, which is so much the more dangerous, because it is in some honest reckoning among most men, and is esteemed as the right Lord and true owner of that time which for the most part it holds by usurpation and iniurie. This is the immoderate care of the world, &c of things of this life, though in themselves honest and lawfull, when a man doth winde himselfe into such a labyrinth and maze of affaires, as hee cannot get out at fit times to spirituall and religious duties, at least not to those which are priuate, when the heart is so surcharged with bargaines and purchases, and buying and selling, and building, and such like, that God and goodnesse, Christ and Saluation, Heauen and Hell, come not into a mans minde once in a day, scarce once in a weeke, or at least, if they come, they be quickly shut out, and haue no long nor quiet entertainment there, when the soule is ouerwhelmed with caring, thinking, deuising, and striuing how to grow great here, and is so tossed in the gulfie of earthly matters, that it cannot

come

come to land (as it were) to settle it selfe
in any proportion, to thinke how it may
grow great in heauen, and how it may
get possession of the true treasure. This
is a wondrous consumer of good houres,
digging them all into the dunghil of this
world. Christ findes fault with this in Mat. 22.
the Parable : the men bidden to the
feast, had farmes, and Oxen, and Wiues,
and such matters in hand, (busines for-
sooth of more importance then so) and
therefore could not come. And the thor-
nie ground had so much carking and ca-
ring how to liue, that it doth euen choak
the Word, the good seede could not
grow thereby. And the Lord complains
of them of the captiuitie of Iudah, that Hag. 1.23.
they could find time to build their owne
houses, yea, and to seele them too, but
they said, it was no time to build the
house of God, so this sinne doth ingrose
all the time to it selfe, and will not giue
elbow roome to any good exercise, es-
pecially to any priuate exercises, with-
out which, the publike are but as meat
without digestion, and yet it comes like
an honest & approuable thing, painted
with

with the name of thristinesse and paines in ones lawfull calling. To fence our selues against this rauenous and lurking fault, wee must binde our selues to these three rules, which all depend vpon the

Mat.6.33. rule of Christ, that bids *ys first seeke the kingdome of God, first in time, and first in affection*: And againe, *Lay vp your treasure in Heaven*. Hence I say, three rules may be collected, to which hee that would not be spoiled of good occasions to the soule by worldlines, must more and more frame himselfe and his life.

20. ver.

The first is that no man suffer himselfe to enter vpon so many busynesses, or any so eagerly, as that his ordinarie af-faires should hinder himselfe or his familie from the performance of ordinary religious exercises.

The common and daily matters of this world in any mans calling whatso-
ever, should not draw him or his familie from common and daily duties of Reli-
gion, such are reading, praying, medita-
ting and religious obseruing of the Sab-
both: for here a man must take care for
his

his household as well as for himselfe, that
hee doe not hinder them from taking
conuenient time to pray, and read, &c.
by forcing vpon them an ouer great
burthen of ordinary businesse. For if the
soule be to be preferred before the bo-
dy, and heauen before earth, then those
customable matters that pertaine to the
sauing of the soule must be set before,
much more stand equall with the things
that pertaine to the body. Secondly, the
extraordinary workes of our calling (if
any fall out) must not barre vs from the
extraordinary workes of Religion. As
for example, haruest and hay-time or the
like, are extraordinary times for the bu-
sinesse for the body : so preparation to
the Sacrament, fasting, (if neede so re-
quire) and such like, are extraordinarie
workes for the soule; now as the care of
inning ones corne or grasse must not
keepe him from taking time to prepare
himselfe to the Sacrament, or to fast at
his neede: so the receiving of the Lords
supper is matter of more then ordinarie
vse for the soule, & some needful iourny
stands in the like manner for the body,
but

but a man must rather deferre his journey (if it may be put off without ouermuch hinderance to him) then omit the receiuing of the Lords supper. The same rule must be kept in all other particulars. For if the soule be more worth, and must be more carefully attended on then the body (as it is no reason the hand-maide should take place of the Mistresse,) then those things which doe after a peculiar manner concerne the good and profit thereof, must not be neglected for such as doe more specially helpe the state of the body outwardly. Lastly, if some outward duty of religion haue been put off from the time wherin it should be performed by some sodaine and vnxpected busynesse, that required such halfe (as in such case ordinary duties of religion may be deferred) then some ordinary busynesse of lesse waight must in recompence giue place to that exercize afterwards, and a man must finde time for that, whether it be reading, praying or meditating, by leauing vndone (for that space) something that may be better spared. And thus you haue heard

heard what be those speciall euils which lye in waite to cousen vs of our good time, and how they may be prevented. And so the first part is handled, namely, from what time is to be readeemed.

Now followes to shew what it is that is to be redemeed, and so you shall fully know wherein this duety consists. Now by Time the Apostle means two things: First, the very passing away of houres and minutes, the space and leasure of any thing; and secondly, the good occasions or opportunities that fall out in this space. For the word in the originall signifies not alone the very sliding of minutes, but the space considered also with some speciall fitnessse, that it hath for some good, which we call the season of it. Now for the first, it shall not be needfull to say any more, being that every one knowes, that euery thing must haue some space wherein to be done. And he that will auoide the ffeuine forenamed euils, shall never want time or the space wherein to doe or get good. But for the occasions & fit opportunities that fall out, now for this, now for that, in this

this space, it is some more skill to finde them out and make vse of them.

Now these seasons are all of two sorts: First, such whereby a man may more easilly get some good to himselfe: Secondly, such wherby a man may with more fitnessse and ease doe some good. Of the first sort, namely, seasonable opportunities to get good, I will name three particulars which are most needfull to be considered, and by proportion of which any man may come to the knowledge of other like. The first, when God continues the Gospell, offering daily the Word and Sacrament, and calling to repentance and amendment of life; this is the season of repenting; this is the hartiest wherein wee may reape Christ if wee be not negligent; this is the acceptable yeere of the Lord, in which one shall be received if hee returne. Whilest wisdome liftis vp her voyce; whilest her messengers come daylie to invite vs; whilest her gates stand open, and her dinner stands ready drest; whilest her message is done vnto vs, all this time if a man will strive

and

and endeavour to turne from his sinne,
to leave his folly, and forsake his scorning;
hee shall be a welcome guest, shee
will accept him, help him, and giue him
an increase of grace, till hee be become
strong with her meates.

Whosoever liues vnder the preaching
of the Gospell, hath this priuiledge
annexed to the outward teaching, that
if he will but striue and pray to God, to
giue him strength to repent and amend
his wayes and turne to him, God will
(vpon his promise) heare his prayers &
assist him: but when the gospell is gone
then the date is past, a man may call, and
not be heard; and cry, and not be regard-
ed. So then every man redeemes this
season of the Gospell, when hee gives
himselfe to consider seriously of those
faults which hee findes in himselfe, and
heares sharply reprooued in the word,
and hereupon resolues to forsake them,
and doth not onely his owne best en-
deavour, but earnestly calls vpon God
for his helpe, without which his power
is but weakenes and ineffectuall; when
hee doth also duely ponder vpon the

D holy

holy Commandements that hee heares preached, and those exhortations that are daily sounded in his eares to moue him to doe such duties as God requires, and hereupon concludes with himselfe to set about this worke, and craues the strength of God to beare him through in the same. And when hee doth aduisedly thinke of the promises that are generally proclaimed, and labours to get some assurance that he is such a one to whom the right of these promises appertaine : thus doing, I say, one redemeſ the time wisely, and makes his aduantage of the Gospell while it continueth, which is a thing that all men should doe, but ſo rare in the world as that it is wonder the Lord hath ſo patiently continued his louing voyce, when men ſcoffe at it and will not heare. The Lord hath and doth ſend his Prophets amongſt vs, as he did among the lewes, riſing vp earely, and ſending them which with all earnestneſſe doe proclaim the dangerous euent that ſhall follow vpon prophanenesſe, neglect and contempt of Gods word, breaking of his Sabbath, railing,

railing, wrathfulnesse, whordome, wantonnesse, couetousnes, theeuing, oppressing, standering, lying, and such like: yet how many runne on in these euils presumptuously, rushing like the horse into the battaile, with an vnreasonable boldnesse, not fearing any danger, and shutting their eares against these reproofes, as the deafe Adder doth, that they may not be moued by them to amendment? ah, how contrary is this to redēcting the time? If any man haue hitherto lost the season, let him now grow wise, and euē at this time turne to God, and beg power to forsake these finnes. How often and how earnestly are men exhorted to all good works by the continuall voyce of God speaking vnto them by his seruants? to read the word of God daylie; to pray priuately; to meditate vpon the word; to watch ouer their dayes; and to call themselues to a reckoning euery day for the faults committed in the day; yet who regards this voyce? who markes these exhortations? where is one that hath inioyned himselfe to some constancy in praying, reading, and

the forenamed duties? This is to sleep in haruest, a most foolish practise and vnwise, wherefore whilst there is yet a little time left, whilst we haue the light, let vs walke in it, that we be not ouertaken with darkenesse. Hee that hath not yet begun, let him be sorry that he hath put it off so late, and now set foote into these wayes of God, whilst God sets out his word as a candle to direct him, and as his hand to leade him by. The promises of God are in like sort published amongst vs. Happinesse is held vp as a reward of all true hearted Christians, and the crowne of life is proposed to those which are sound and faithfull members of Iesus Christ. And yet as though all were sure to get it, or it wer not worth seeking by any, the most men flatter themselues in their sins, and will needes promise these good things to themselues, when they haue no assurance or proofe out of Gods Word, whereby to lay claime or title to them. This is a grieuous and a dangerous neglecting of time. And if any haue not yet made sure work this way, let him euen now

now set about it, whilst the Word as a touchstone is before him, by which hee may try himself, & which wil make him such a one as hee should be, if hee will striue to follow it, and pray for abilitie to be ruled by it. So then whilst God holds out his benefits, and stands with his armes open to accept vs, let vs take his benefits, and be perswaded to come vnto him in good earnest, let it be too late to trauaile when mid-night shall come instead of noone day. This is the first and chiefest opportunitie of getting good: namely, to ioyn with the Gospell, and follow it with our endeauours and prayers, by which it shall be made effectuall vnto vs. The socond opportunitie of getting good is in time of youth and health, whilst the vigour and strength of the body and mind is fit for labour and capable of instruction. And *Salomon* in his booke of Penance, *viz.* *Ecclesiastes*, bids *Remember thy creator Eccle. 12.1* *in the dayes of thy youth, before the enill dayes come.* These dayes of youth and health are good dayes when hee which will vse them, hath his memorie stedfast

to call to minde his euill wayes, that he may bewaile them, and to treasure vp good instructions and promises that may guide and comfort him, when the lims will ioyne with the mind, and the minde hath the body as a fit instrument to seeke the kingdome of heauen, if a man will addresse himselfe vnto it: but the dayes of old age and sicknes faile much of the commodious fitnesse for goods the memory is cracked, the head and vnderstanding is weake, and especially the time of sicknesse is so filled with paine, so shaken with distractions, and incumbred with grieves and sorrowes, that one is nothing fit to repent, or pray, or heare, or to doe any such thing.

Now when a man in the prime of his dayes, and in the fulnes of his health, will give himselfe to seeke heaven, will heare the word, and meditate ypon it, and apply it to himselfe, will confesse his sinnes, and force himselfe to bewaile them, will pray to God for good things, and set the whole course of his life in a right frame, hee hath well taken opportunity, and he shall have rest in his latter

Latter dayes, much quiet and content-
ment, at least much strength and assi-
stance in his sicknesse, because hee hath
something in store against the time of
Want.

But alas, how doe the common sort
of men bewray their monstrous folly
in this behalfe? What more common
then that sottish and brutish speech, at
least such ignorant & profane thoughts,
men will repent when they be old, and
cry God mercy when they feele them-
selues sick, and amend all when they be
ready to goe ou: of the world? and foo-
lish man, thou knowest not whether
thou shalt dye sodainely; whether thou
shalt haue thy wits and sences; or whe-
ther thou shalt haue power of heart to
make the least colour of repentance in
those extremities; how many haue died
sodainely? how many sottishly? and
yet how doe men for all these warnings
deferre the best businesse, namely, the
worke of repentance & turning to God,
which will require the whole strength
of the soule, to the worst and most crasie
time of sicknesse or old age? As if a

D 4 prisonerz

prisoner at what time a man was offring
him a pardon, and calling ypon him to
take it some good space before the Assises,
should say, may let me alone, I will
not looke after my pardon till immedi-
ately before I am to come before the
Judge : this were a most fond part, es-
pecially, if it were so, that the theef knew
not whether or no the next day should
be the day of his arraignment: so the case
stands betwixt the Lord and vs; if any
man therefore hath ben so little carefull
of his owne eternall good, as to put off
repentance and conuersion till that dead
time, or doth foster any such hamefull
conceit in his heart, let him now cast it
out, and now that hee hath his health
and strength, vpon better deliberation
take in hand this work.

Be not so extreameley mad, as to give
more time to the Devil then to God,
especially to give the principall time.
Hee were a fooleish trauailer that would
willingly gallop all the day quite con-
trary to his way, and being told of it
would answere, when it drawes towards
Sun-set I will turne into the right way,

Why

Why be men thus blockish for their soules, that knowing themselves to be out of the way of life, will yet of purpose deferre to set their feete into the right path till sicknesse or age, when the Sun of their life is at the point of setting? Ah, let our prouerbe teach vs more wit: *Make hay while the Sun shines.* Turne, turne, whilst thou hast health & strength, vse all to get repentance and saluation. The last chiefe opportunitie of getting good, is, when a man hath company, and is in the society of some godly wise man, able to giue sound counsel & direction, able to answere all doubts, obiections, and scruples of ones minde; now there is a fit opportunitie to grow in wisedome, to be resolued of all doubts, and to seeke direction.

So then, a man ought not to suffer bashfulness or other foolish matters to put by that good communication, whereby hee might inrich his soule. It is a speciall fauour of God that any man can come where his seruants are that haue excellent gifts, and he doth deprive himselfe of much good that will not seeke to

to benefit himselfe by them. When the woman of Samaria perceiued Christ to be a Prophet, she proposed her doubt vnto him, albeit hee was a stranger. When *John* Baptist might be come to, the Publicans and sinners came and aske what they should doe. Whilst the Tayler had *Paul* in his keeping, he came to aske that needfull question: *What shall I doe to be saved?* So if there be any man whose heart is perplexed with some doubt, or ouerburdened with some temptation, or ouermastered by some sinne, it is a part of good discretion for such a one to goe and seeke the advise of some able Christian or wise man, before that either himselfe be too far gone, or hee want the opportunitie of such a counsellor or helper.

These be three speciall occasions of obtaining good to a mans owne soule from things without him: In all which to take the time is a most commendable point of wisedome, but to be negligent is such folly as *Salomon* reproves, when hee saith, *that a foole bath a price in his hand to get wisedome, but he wants*

a heart. Oh that men would beware of this hartlesnesse, and take heed of loosing their price, by which they might get wisedome,

Now I come to speake of the occasions of doing good : and these are either in others or in themselues. First, in others, and that for their soule and body. Sometimes a man shall finde a kinde of tractableness in those with whom hee hath to deale, that their ears stand open, and they are ready to drink in an exhortation or reprooфе by reason of some affliction that is upon them, or some need they haue of our help, or such like occasion. Here is time for a kinde and sound admonition, then a man ought in all loue, and yet with all plainenesse to follow the occasion, *striking* (as our proverbe is) *whilst the iron is hot*, speaking when he sees him in the melting vaine, ready to take all well, and in good part. And so *Elizb* notes, that when a man is brought to his death bed, and to abhorre all worldly delights, then his eares are bored, and then there is work for an interpreter: before the bones clattered, and

and the mourners looked for the funeral, an interpreter was despised, but now his words are obserued : thus a man may doe much good to his neighbours or seruants soule, if hee waite for a time when he is fit to receiue admonition, & then giues him it; as the husbandman in drye weather waites for a shower of raine, and then sets in his plow: Againe, for the body, sometimes one shall meeete with one that hath true need, that is, in distresse for his bodilie estate, and doth indeed want relief; this is an occasion and fit time to shew liberalities; now a man must open his purse, and be ready to giue freely; I meane not, that every time a man meeetes a begger hee should be giving, (for to those a man should not giue, but in the very extremitie of necessitie,) but if our brother hath been afflicted by any losse through fire, or such like (that he doe not make himselfe needy by idlenesse, but it come vpon him by some hand of God) here is an obiect fit for mercy, and here one may be seasonably liberal, here is an altar, offer the sacrifice of almes vpon it, which

is a thing wherewith God is well pleased. Some other time, sparing may be more fit, but now is a season to be more free of gift, and open handed.

There is an occasion of doing good offred in others, wherein I haue named these two particulars, that every man might accordingly take notice of other like. Then there is also occasion of doing good offred in ones selfe, whether by some outward thing that befals him, or by some inward stirring of the mind and affections : as outwardly when a time comes in, wherein wee haue received some more speciall benefit; this should prouoke vs to more thankfulness by remembrance of the benefit. Thus this time of Christ's Natiuitie should (if any way) be celebrated, that it might turne to an occasion of more hartie thanksgivuing, and more true obedience vnto Christ, that gave himselfe for our sins, and tooke our nature vpon him, that in it hee might beare our iniquties. So when wee be in the inioying of Gods creatures, whilst we be eating and drinking, or such like, here is a speciall

special season to lift vp the hart to God, and to kindle a flame of praise by this fewell, that our thankes might be so much the more earnest, by how much we haue a more present feeling of gods inercy, and doe euē tast how good he is.

On the other side a man is sometimes pressed with a sore crosse and affliction that pincheth his soule; here is a very fit occasion of humbling ones selfe, and examining ones heart: for in these afflictions God calls to humiliation for the most part, which duty being performed after a man may reioyce in his afflictions; but whiles the burden of the crosse is heavy, here is a notable meanes to further one in the worke of humiliation, and if one can take the time when God smites, he may (at least he ought) cause his hart to stoup before him with more ease, then when he was at more ease for his body. Againe, sometimes a man hath a more inward stirring of his affections which he cannot haue at another times; this must be followed, greedily taken, sometimes at the Sermon, or vpon some other

other occasion, a man hearing or thinking of his sinne, and the punishment due therunto, haue a kinde of pricking in his heart, and some touch of remorse within him; his conscience begins to tell him that all is not well, and hee growes to some orderly conclusion; sure I will now be sorry for this fault, and amend it: now if one will follow this motion, and goe after God when hee calls, (for this is one of his inward callings,) and not shoulde it out with fond mirth, but nourish it by a plaine confession of his sinne to God, and an harty begging of grace and strength from him, to do that which hee now sees hee should doe; this will come to godly sorrow, and so to repentance: but else if hee choake it and quench it, it will vanish, and the heart wil be more hard frozen in the dregs of sin. So that if there be any whose heart at this time at the speaking of these words, whose soule smites him for his swearing, lying, Sabbath-breaking, Whordome, drunckennesse, gameing, couetousnesse, railing, or the like sin, let him when he is gone out of the Church, cast himselfe downe

downe in the presence of God, confessing
this is his sinne or sinnes freely, without
dissembling, labour to be more sorrow-
full for them then ever he was, and pray
to God to pull him out of this mire. This
if hee doe, he shall take the time, he shall
be a conuert, the Lord will receiue him,
as the vnthrifte prodigall Sonne was
receiued, and by redeeming the time hee
shall finde redemption to his soule. But
if hee despise this admonition of God,
his soule shall be more feared then be-
fore, his heart shall be deliuered to a
greater hardnesse and sencelesnessse then
euer before, and so be further off from
repentance and life.

But alas, the fanticke dealing of men
in this case is too palpable, and to be
wondred at, when Gods word strikes
vpon them, when they feele the keene-
nesse of it, when the threatnings haue
cut so that they smart for it; then they
run to dicing, carding, drinking, daun-
cing, &c. as it were of set purpose to
drive away the spirit of God, that was
comming towards them to heale their
soule. None is so madde to take such
courses

courses for his body, that when he feeles the sore to smart, then to run from the Phisition, and couer it cuer with a clout, or striue to forget it: yet for their soules a number deale so sencelessly in this thing as much as in any other, verifying that name which the holy Ghost hath giuen vnto them, when he termes them mad men: for it is a propertie peculiar to a mad man, that feeling paine, he will hate the Phisition, and run away from him that would help. Oh, that those of vs which haue hitherto beene so mad, would returne now to their right minds, and to God to be healed. Againe, sometimes a mans heart is stirred vp with an inward and secret reioycing or gladnesse. Then saith Saint James, *If any man be merry let him sing Psalmes;* now he shall doe it with a cheerfull courage indeede; and therefore *David* would in such a case rise at mid-night to sing a Psalme, rather then hee would loose the season, when it would relish with him so well.

Sometimes also a man or a woman shall feele a secret pensiuenesse growing ouer his heart, so that it cuen melts

as the ground that thawes after a frost, and hee could even weepe abundantly, teares offer themselues in a full measure. Here is an excellent occasion of renewing ones repentance. Now whatever be ones company, whatever be the matter in hand, except it be of absolute necessitie, let him leaue it off and betake him to his chamber or somne secret place, let him fall on his knees, now let him open his mouth and acknowledge his sins against himselfe, giuing vent to his griefe, and turning all to godly sorrow, whatsoeuer the occasion was at first. Thus if any body doe, his repentance shall receive a notable increase: but if he passe it ouer, his heart will not answere his desire another time.

Furthermore, sometimes a mans hart is earnestly moued with some hungry desire to enjoy some grace of God, and great longing after some Christian vertue: now let him in the heat and flame of his desire addresse himselfe to prayer; then one shal send vp such piercing cries and give such a loude knocke against the gates of Christis mercie, that hee

can-

cannot chuse but heare, and send one
backe with an almes, as it were: thus he
redeemes the time; but else his desires
will be so cold and chill at another time,
that hee shall scarce thrust a petition out
of his lips, and then these drop downe at
his feet, and doe him little good. And
thus in every other through the turning
of our affections, we must follow Gods
spirit, yea, or nature when it leads vs,
wisely turning all to spirituall vses. And
thus you may perceiue what it is to re-
deeme the time, and how it may be at-
tained. Now let vs come to some briete
application of the point.

First, this point thus explained meetes
with a number of imperfections even in
the best, and him that is most carefull of
his wayes, of which we are now to take
notice, and purpose amendment, if we
haue not hitherto considered of them.
For this is a fault to which a man (euen
in a good measure spirituall) is subiect
for want of redeeming the time, that he
comes to that lazie passe now and then,
as he hath nothing to do, nothing where-
about to settle himselfe. It is a carnall

Vse.

vnsettlednes in a christian to be so negligent of his time, as that he shoulde haue any minute of time which hee knowes not how to bestow vpon some good & profitable vse. The Lord offers such a multitude of occasions to do and receiue good, that if wee could with wisedome take them, there is no houre passeth vs in which we might not doe or get some good. And if there be nothing else, yet this is something where about hee hath good occasion to be busied, euen to fall out with himselfe, because hee hath nothing (I meane he sees nothing that he hath to doe.) Sometimes if men see their seruants standing idle & vnbusied, they can aske them with a kinde of indignation, What, can you find nothing to doe? And sure the Lord might come with this question diuers times to vs, and say as it is in this parable: *Why stand you all the day idle?* asking whether the world were so emptie of occasions, and our selues so perfectly well, as that wee can finde nothing to doe? But there is no houre passeth vs which wee shoulde not find fit for some good thing, if we could catch

catch the opportunitie before it be turned, and did not harme our selues for want of diligent redeeming the time.

Yet there are other faults of which Christians are to be warned: as to begin with the last first: How many be there that are so stuffed with worldly busynesses, and yet are greedy of more, as that they cannot finde leisure one houre in a day, nay scarce in a weeke, to bestow vpon reading, praying, meditating or conferring? Yea, as though time were made for nothing but to seeke wealth and transitory things, so it is the chiefest of their care. It appeares that such labor not for conscience but for gaine, because they cannot breake off ordinary labours so long, as well to performe ordinarie duties of religion. Many may say (with grieve inough if they did well) that their hands are so full of the world, as that they can scarce through the weeke, take the Bible into their hands to read any thing therein, unlesse perhaps it bee in the Church at some publike meeting. Thus men which are borne to a better inheritance are content to weare out

themselves in the earth, as if they were to perish in the earth with other baser Creatures, Here is one fault to be amended then, Let no Christian bestow so much time in the world, as that he cannot finde sufficient to seeke heauen and the things thereof.

Then for the matter of sports, mee thinkes some Christians should euen shrinke before the word of reproofe comes to them, when they may think of so many houres spent, such a day at bowles; so many it may be the next day in shooting; so many the third day in shouel-boottd, or the like exercises: happily in themselves not vnlawfull, and when they come to reckoning for religious exercises, the count comes in very slowly, by the minutes or quarters, some halfe quarter of an howre or thereabouts bestowed such a day in praying alone, and some three or four dayes after about a quarter of an howre in reading, and (it may be) the next weeke, some halfe quarter more in meditation: and thus if the expences of time were written in our debt booke, as they be in Gods

Gods, wee might even blush to read so many items for pleasure and sport, and scarce one or two in a side for priuate religious exercises,

Then for our words: may wee not hang downe our heads with shame to thinke that God made our tongues, and we speak scarce one word in an hundred to his glory? Idle words; even many of those whom we are to regard as christians, count them no faults, neither come to repent for them; it was but a word out of the way, say they. But this power to speake (being a gift peculiar to men aboue all beasts) ought to be more preciously regarded, then that it should be abused for base trifles.

Then for idle thoughts; who makes question of them almost? Alas, we doe not remember that God hath searching eyes and fierce, which pierce into the depth of ones soule. Wee dreame that thoughts are not so much, and spare our selues in our vnthriftnesse, when wee should deale more religiouly with our selues.

Lastly, some might be reprooued

E 4 for

for too long lying in bed, and spending more hours in slugging or sleeping, then health and strength doth require: many perhaps will thinke that it is left to their own pleasure, & that the preacher is too busie, if hee take vpon him to teach them when to rise, as though it were no fault to ouer-sleepe themselues. Indeede some old and sickly mens bo-dyes must take it when they may, but for the greater part of men, if they knew what good the first halfe houre of the earely morning spent in religious exercises would bring them, they would not loue sleepe so well, as for it to neglect them. It is well said, *hee that seekes mee earely shall finde mee*, and it well may be literally vnderstood. Therefore brethren there is none but may see a fault in himselfe in these respects, some or al of them, and happy is he that resolues to mend it. Therefore if you will take good counsell, doe thus when you come home. Thinke alas, if time must be reckoned for, and should be redeemed, how far am I behinde hand with God, that (what for sleep, what for play, what for idle bab-
ling

ing, what for vaine thoughts, and excessive worldlines) I cannot make a good account of the forith, yea of the hundredth part of my time? And then gricue because thou hast beene such an vnthrift of time. & now begin carefully to spare before all be gone. But now here is a reprofe more sharpe for some others that are not willing to heare of that care, tell them they must not spend a whole day, or a whole night in playing & sporting. What not at Christmas? (say they) why you are too precise? well, but yet vouchsafe to consider a little what God speaks, Thou sayest, this is too much precisenes, and so saith the world; but the Apostle bids to walke precisely or warily, redeeming the time: and hee that will take time to card or dice, and to vse lawfull recreations immoderately (I meane so as to be at his play the greater part of the day, & it may be some if not the most of the night too) shall pay full dearely for it: eyther he must repent, & vndoe this with much griefe and sorrow of hart, or else he must smart for it hereafter worse in hell. I would not deale ouer sharply with

with thee: but take Gods louing admition, and let him haue one tenth part of the foure and twentie houres, yea more a good deale then so, now that thou hast more leisure then ordinary.

And here is yet a kinde of people that are to be more rigorously handled, such as are all gamesters, that spend no one houre waking but vpon pleasure: the world calles them scatter-goods, and the Lord will call them scatter-houres, that do misspend both goods & houres. Such (let them thinke of themselues how they will) as doe make gameing the greatest part (if not all) of their occupation, must be content to heare that they haue no portion in heauen, as they can keepe no portion in earth.

How can one haue treasure in heauen, that never laid vp any there? if God hate a gamester, so that he will not giue him good clothes to his backe, (now he hath threatned that hee shall be clothed with rags) he will much lesse afford him a seate in heauen. And howsoeuer for a time they may ruffle it out, and be clad better then their more laborious neighbours,

neighbours, yet this trade will surely vndeoe them: for they haue brought this perill vpon themselues, that either God must not be true or they must not be rich, hee must forfeit his truth, or they their goods; besides their name & soules: wherefore let such as haue hitherto giuen their dayes to such an vnsanctified and inordinate course, surcease from the practise of their lewdnesse, and both in conscience for their soules sake, and in discretion for their goods sake, resolute to become better husbands of time, least their gameing on earth bring beggerie to their latter dayes, and damnation to their soules for euer.

Lastly, let all good Christians be admonished to make precious account of their time, and with much carefulnesse to take the seasons and opportunities of God, according as they haue heard it is their dutie. Christians either indeede purpose to learne, or else make a shew of such a purpose when they come to Church. Ah, that we might all learne this thrift, and practise it as wee haue heard: begin to day, and hold on still, now

now is a time of remembryng the most admirable work of Christ's incarnation, when he was made flesh of the Virgin to purge vs from sinne, and saue vs from wrath by the sleding of his bloud, and suffrings which he endured in his flesh, Giue not all (ah, why should wee giue any of it ?) this time to play, chiefly to bezeling, surfeting or wantonnesse, but take some space to consider of the greatness of this benefit, and to be thankfull proportionably thereunto. I would I might hope to preuaile with any by this exhortation, but howsoeuer, it is needful to be spoken, that none may haue occasion to pretend ignorance, you see or might see your duties in this behalfe, & in practising the same shall finde the benefit of it. But fooles will scorne admonition, and those that haue accustomed them selues to lust, will not be intreated to pull their necks from out their hard yoake, and to serue a better Master; nay, so foolish are a number, that they thinke to doe Christ great honour in spending the day wheron they imagine that hee was borne, and some few that follow,

follow it, in more then ordinary riot and sinfull excessse: as though he were a God that loued iniquitie; and were delighted with drinking, and swilling, & gameing, and swearing, and surfetting, & all disorder: but those that know Christ, know full well that he is not pleased with such pranks. Wherefore if wee will spend a day to Christ, spend it more religiousely and soberly then all other dayes, not more prophaneley and luxuriousely. Wee should neyther forget his birth, but when we obserue some speciall time of remembraunce, shew that we remember his goodnessse by doing good, more honour to his name, not by committing more rebellion against him.

And to conclude, as at this time so at all times, let all men that would haue their soules well furnished with inward substance, play the good husbands in taking time and opportunitie whensoeuer wee finde any fit occasion of getting or doing good in our selues or others, let it not slip, but lay hold vpon it, and vse it. It is ioyfull to thinkake (if we could think of it seriously) what commoditie this

thrift

thrift would bring, how much know-
ledge and godlinesse might hee get that
would keepe his tongue and heart care-
fully to good matters ? What a large
treasure of good workes might he haue
that would be ready whensoeuer his
neighbours necessitie called for help, to
stretch out his hand for his reliefe ; and
when he saw him fit for an admition
would wisely bestow it vpon him ? how
full of grace should his old age and
sicknesse be, that would give his health
to God, and his first yeeres to the ser-
uice of his soule ? how great acquain-
tance might hee get in the pallace of
Wisedome, that would come to her at
her first call, and enter so soone as the
doores were set open ? how many
sins might a man leaue, and how much
power should hee get ouer all finne
that when his heart smites him, would
turne to God by prayer and confession ?
What great Grace would affliction
bring, if a man would settle himselfe
to humiliation, and gaging his heart in
time of affliction ? how much thank-
fulness might hee haue that would lift

vp

vp his heart to God in the fruition of
euer blessing? how many fervent pray-
ers might hee store vp in heauen that
would not fore-flow time, when hee
feeles his desires earnest? how comfor-
tably might he weepe ouer Christ, and
how plentifully, that would take the
tide of teares, and turne all pensiuenesse
to this vse? and how many sweet and
cheerefull Psalmes might a Christian
sing, if he would turne all his mirth into
a Psalme, and offer it vp to God? Oh,
what a large increase of grace would
this care bring? how should his soule
chriue that would be thus husbandlie?
Surely as the common speech hath
commended a little land well tilled be-
fore much more ground that is careles-
ly dressed: so the weaker meanes with
this care, would be more auailable to
inrich the heart, then are the strongest
without it.

It is not the greatnessse of ones living
that makes one rich, but the good im-
ploying and watiue husbanding of it: so
it is not the greatnessse of the meanes,
but the diligent redeeming of time, to
make

make vse of the meanes, that makes the
soule wealthy. But if great meanes ioyned
with great care, the increase will be so
much the more large, as a large liuing
with good husbandry: But alas, hence
comes it, that some in the store of all
good meanes of saluation are very beg-
gars and bankrupts, because of their
negligence to take the time & fit season.
They let passe all good opportunities,
and care not for any occasion for the
Soule, and how can their soule thrive?
Wherfore let every true hearted Chri-
stian learne this wisedome and practise
it, as euer hee desires to store his soule
with that wealth which will make him
glorious in the eyes of God, and much
set by euен in heauen among the
Angels. And thus much for
this time, and this du-
tie of redēeming
the time.

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